

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0576

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, BEXP, NU

SUBJECT: CIVAIR-AIRCRAFT PURCHASES BY NICARAGUA'S COMMERCIAL
AIRLINE

REF: (A) 10FAM 521.2; (B) 75 STATE A-3448

1. THE NICARAGUAN AIRLINE, LINEAS AEREAZUDE NICARAGUA S.A. (LANICA), IS IN THE MARKET FOR NEW AIRCRAFT, AND THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT TALKS ARE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN LANICA AND HAWKER-SIDDELY OF GREAT BRITAIN. THE UNITED STATES EARLIER THIS YEAR LOST JIIALE TO HAWKER-SIDDELY WHEN THE BRITISH COMPANY SUPPLIED NICARAGUA WITH A SMALL PRESIDENTIAL JET AIRCRAFT. U.S. EXPORTERS OF AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE URGED TO AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUPPLY LANICA'S AIRCRAFT NEEDS.

2. LANICA CURRENTLY OPERATED TWO LEASED CONVAIR 880'S ON ITS INTERNATIONAL ROUTES TO MIAMI, MEXICO, GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR AND PANAMA. IT ALSO OPERATES TWO C-46'S ON ITS DOMESTIC ROUTES TO THE SMALL TOWN ON NICARAGUA'S EAST COAST. LANICA'S TWO OWNED C-46'S WERE RECENTLY WRECKED, AND IT IS NOW LEASING TWO OTHER C-46'S IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN DOMESTIC SERVICE. IT IS IN THE MARKET FOR NEWER, MORE RELIABLE AIRCRAFT THAN THE C-46'S, AND TALKS HAVE REPORTEDLY TAKEN PLACE WITH HAWKER-SIDDELY REGARDING LANICA'S POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF THE HS-748 AIRCRAFT. THE HS-748 WOULD BE QUITE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SMALL EAST COAST DIRT AIRPORTS. U.S. AIRCRAFT EXPORTERS SHOULD BE URGED TO PRESENT COMPETING OFFERS HOWEVER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. LANICA WOULD PROBABLY

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BE RECEPTIVE TO OTHER OFFERS, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT WOULD LIKE

TO UPGRADE ITS DOMESTIC SERVICE WITH THE SMALLEST CAPITAL OUT-LAY POSSIBLE. THE AIRLINE WOULD ABOVE ALL BE INTERESTED IN GOOD USED AIRCRAFT THAT COULD OPERATE ECONOMICALLY ON SHORT ROUTES AND TO SMALL, PRIMITIVE AIRPORTS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO REF (B) THE EMBASSY PRESENTED LANICA WITH INFORMATION ON ALLEGHENY AIRLINES' OFFER TO SELL CONVAIR 580 TRANSPORTS. LANICA OFFICIALS WERE QUITE INTERESTED, AND WE SO INFORMED ALLEGHENY AIRLINES. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY FOLLOW-UP EFFORT ON THE APRT OF ALLEGHENY OTHER THAN A LETTER WITH SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO THE MANAGER OF LANICA. UNITED STATES EXPORTERS WILL HAVE TO DO MORE THAN SEND LETTERS IN ORDER TO COMPETE WITH FOREIGN FIRMS SUCH AS HAWKER-SIDDELY, WHICH SENT REPRESENTATIVES TO NICARAGUA TO PERSONALLY TALK WITH LANICA OFFICIALS.

4. WE DO NOT KNOW AT WHAT STAGE THE TALKS BETWEEN LANICA AND THE BRITISH ARE AT THIS POINT, BUT U.S. FIRMS SHOULD BE URGED TO CONTACT LANICA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: LANICA, P.O. BOX 753, MANAGUA, NICARAGUA, TEL: 22474 OR 3395 OR 3396, CABLE: LANICA, ATTN: CAPT. MIGUEL MURCIANO, JR., GENERAL MANAGER, OR EUGENIO DUDKIEWICZ, DIRECTOR, AT TEL: 26671.

5. LANICA WILL ALSO BE IN THE MARKET FOR REPLACEMENT FOR ITS TWO CONVAIR 880'S, WHOSE LEASES RUN OUT NEXT YEAR. LANICA OFFICIALS ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THE 880'S ECONOMY, AND THEY WILL PROBABLY SSK TO PURCHASE OR LEASE GOOD, USED AIRCRAFT OF THE BOEING 737, DC-9, OR BAC-111 CLASS TO SERVICE ITS SHORT-TO-MEDIUM DISTANCE INTERNATIONAL ROQIES. U.S. AIRCRAFT EXPORTERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THESE PENDING ACQUISITIONS.

6. LACK OF AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF SALES OPPORTUNITIES CAUSED THE LOSS OF A US\$1 MILLION SALE OF A PRESIDENTIAL JET EARLIER THIS YEAR. HOPEFULLY WE CAN AVOID A SIMILAR LOSS OF SALES TO OTHER COUNTRIES WITH LANICA'S UPCOMING AIRCRAFT PURCHASES. THEBERGE

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